

SCOCHITUATE RAIL TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
May 25, 2016
School Committee Meeting Room, Town Hall

Name	Affiliation	Present	Absent
Josh Ostroff	Board of Selectmen (chair)	X	
Jamie Errickson	Director of Community and Economic Development		X
Geoff Lewis	Senior Planner	X	
Dick Cugini	Recreation and Parks Commission	X	
John Magee	Bicycle and Pedestrian	X	
William Schoenig	Member at Large	X	
David Camacho	Member at Large (vice chair)	X	
Eric Jones	Member at Large	X	
Peter Henry	Member at Large		X
Jan Henderson	Member at Large (clerk)	X	

Also present: Bill McGrath with BETA Group, Paul Lucot with the Friends of Natick Trails, and Barb Coco, a prospective member of the committee. The meeting was called to order at 6:41 P.M.

1. Introductions

Participants introduced themselves.

2. Project Updates

- A. Legal** – The Finance Committee had asked if there were any past or pending litigation or claims against CSX that could impact the Town if we were to obtain the property. Town Counsel asked CSX and they said there is nothing of which they are aware. There are three legal issues to include on a future public hearing agenda including the above, explaining rail banking and eminent domain. The Board of Selectmen (BOS) could include this hearing at a future meeting.
- B. Acquisition including funding** – Town Meeting appropriated \$2.5m towards acquisition with 90% of members voting in favor. The BOS asked the state for \$3m, but at this point it has not been authorized in the Capital Investment Plan (CIP). J. Ostroff is talking with MassDOT officials about advancing CIP construction funding, or using other funds. There is precedent by Holliston to use state funds for acquisition of CSX ROW. As part of private fundraising, we are exploring raising funds through bridge naming rights (similar to what has been done with the MBTA). This project could become a model for state public-private-partnerships for rail trials via bridge naming rights. The main issue is that we need to find the funding by November per the Purchase & Sale agreement, or the purchase price could be up for negotiation again. J. Ostroff and town staff also spoke at the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting when this project was discussed three weeks ago.

Town Meeting voted to acquire the Wonderbread Spur via eminent domain at no cost. CSX is the owner of record and sent a letter stating there would be no compensation. There is no interest or claim from them. This should be mentioned at the public hearing so that the Board can proceed with the taking later this year.

- C. Environmental** – The StanTec Phase I site assessment is complete. They took 150 samples on the trail and the Wonderbread Spur. They did not find any surprises. Given that it was a rail line they anticipated finding lead, arsenic, petroleum, and coal ash and dust. They also found some PCBs in one area, but not at reportable levels. The trail does not need to have the soils remediated, but it does need to be capped with compacted fill and 4" of asphalt. The area off-trail are not a hazard, but we may replace the soils in some areas where people may be in contact with the soils. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has issued best practices for cleaning up rail trails. Another engineering solution could include barriers. One abutter was concerned with airborne contamination during construction. There will be very little excavation, mostly materials will be brought in to cap it.

J. Ostroff suggested that the Committee recommend to the BOS that they hold a hearing on the Phase I report by StanTec, and invite the company to report on their findings. In discussion it was agreed that the report should go to MG Reardon at MassDOT to distribute it as appropriate, for CSX to get a copy of it, and for BETA to look at it too to ensure there are no surprises down the road. Abutters should be notified of the meeting. W. Schoenig made the motion, D. Cugini seconded it. The committee voted to approve unanimously.

The Finance Committee also requested to see the report. It is 1,500 pages. Discussion included putting it on the Town's FTPsite and letting the public know it's available. It would be good to create a vehicle to answers questions in advance in writing. It would be good to have a staff memo that summarizes it or extracts the executive summary. It would be good to link to the state's minimum standards for the various contaminants.

- D. Metes and Bounds Survey** – The survey has been completed with few surprises. Where roads cross over or under the ROW there needs to be clarification of ownership. At Rt. 9 the State probably owns the land under the bridge. At Loker and Fisher Streets it may be the Town of Natick or CSX that owns the land under the bridges. At Cochituate Street the bridge is a state bridge, but who owns below it? The Purchase and Sale needs to include everything on the survey. G. Lewis will talk with MassDOT to clarify easements over or under roadways. He will also review the survey for any encroachment by abutters, which appears to be the case, but this can be addressed in time.

- E. Design** – B. McGrath said that the revised plans, with the shortened trail terminating at Willow Street, were submitted early this month. The plans will be reviewed by District 3. Then plans will be sent to the utilities. They have 30 days to review them and schedule a utility meeting. This has to happen before the MassDOT public hearing. Per J. Ostroff, MG said it could be before October.

Because federal highway dollars may be used the project needs to be cleared with a National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) review. There is a checklist that is used to clear a project and determine if permits are needed. BETA is not anticipating any issues, especially because we were allowed early acquisition authority by FHWA .

We will need a big venue for the public hearing. Maybe the High School?

F. **Construction** – nothing new to report

3. **Proposal for Environmental and Legal public hearing** – see above including both legal and environmental issues.
4. **Friends of Natick Trails update** – P. Lucot said that they are organizing levels of membership and sponsorship. They are thinking of holding an annual meeting at AmVets and make it a picnic with the objective of fundraising. They are concerned about how much they need to raise and need to define that before they can proceed. J. Ostroff suggested that \$4m is not realistic for private fundraising, and \$1m is aggressive.
5. **Meeting minutes April 7, 2016** - One revision was suggested where it says Coolidge Hill it should read Camp Arrowhead. With that change G. Lewis made a motion to approve, D. Cugini seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the April 7 minutes.
6. **Natick Days, September 10, 2016** – Members were encouraged to save the date. It will be important to have a number of people available. BETA will update the aerial map if MassGIS has updated their aerals. They can also shade below Willow Street to show future phases.
7. **New business** – There were reports on the Open House at Modera, a table Framingham CRT had at REI, and the Framingham CRT Ribbon Cutting event. See photos on the website. Per previous discussions E. Jones asked the Natick Runners group to remove photos of people on CSX property from their website.

E. Jones noted that his tenure expires in June. He put in an application to renew. Others may need to as well.
8. **Future meeting schedule** – Could be in June to discuss any updates related to acquisition funding and design review.

On a motion by J. Henderson, seconded by E. Jones, the committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by J. Henderson